

Second Sunday after Christmas

In him was life and the life was the light of all people.

—John 1:4 NRSV

Explore

maps, candles, flashlights, Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, *Herald*, Christmas lights, newsprint, glitter pens, tape

Sources of Light

Have many forms of light around the classroom (candles; matches; lamps; flashlights; books including the Bible, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants; magazines including the *Herald*; and photos of people). Also drape garlands with lights or inexpensive Christmas tree lights around the ceiling of the room. Stick iridescent stars to the ceiling. Discuss how each produces a different type of light, artificial (neon signs, flashing lights, street lamps) and natural (sun, moon, stars). Give students large sheets of paper for them to either illustrate or list all types of light. Use glitter pens for writing. In addition have students list people who bring light to their lives. Title the poster “Celebrating Life.” Suggest students find a way to thank the people they are celebrating.

Extract

Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, flip chart or chalkboard, markers or chalk, tape

John 1:1–18
(John 1:1–19 IV)
Genesis 1:3–4
Psalm 27:1
Matthew 5:14
John 3:19
John 8:5, 12
John 12:46
II Corinthians 4:4
Revelation 21:24
Doctrine and Covenants 157:16

Light Sent by God

The Gospel of John reveals a different perspective of Jesus than do the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Briefly skim the opening verses of each Gospel to identify what is different. Matthew and Luke begin with Jesus’ birth, boyhood, and daily life, while John emphasizes the words of Jesus and his teachings. The man named John, sent by God in John 1:6, is not the writer of the Gospel. Read more about the history of “the man sent by God” in verses 19–27 and in Luke 3 and Matthew 3. This John came to introduce “the Word” told about in the scriptures.

Read John 1:1–18 (John 1:1–19 IV). Who is “the Word” referred to in the passage? How long has “the Word” existed according to John? What part did “the Word” play in creation? What is “the Word” also “the Light”? What does “the Word” mean to people today? What other insights are revealed in John that are not in other Gospels?

There are many places in the Bible with references to the word “light.” Divide into pairs (if possible) and distribute the following scripture verses. Discuss the context of light. Select and write the scriptures on a flip chart or chalkboard.

Genesis 1:3–4 Psalm 27:1 Matthew 5:14 John 1:9 John 3:19
John 8:5, 12 John 12:46 II Corinthians 4:4
Revelation 21:24 Doctrine and Covenants 157:16

Experience

blindfolds

Walking In and Out of Light

Arrange for students to take a “light/dark walk” throughout the building. Have students pair up and blindfold one. Lead students on a path throughout the building or outside. Have partners let the blindfolded students touch, smell, and hear everything around them. Have students lead by giving directions to move, but not telling them where they are or what is coming up. After the path is complete, have students switch places as they return to the classroom.

When the walk is finished, ask them to discuss the contrast between walking in the light and walking in the dark. Stimulate discussion with these questions. What was difficult about walking the path blindfolded? How easy or difficult was it to trust their partner? What senses were used along the path? How did it feel to be “out of the light”? How did it feel to be the responsible unblindfolded partner? What differences were experienced when places were exchanged? What was done for the blindfolded partner that could apply to daily life? Continue the discussion by comparing the walk to the way people live their lives. Discuss how many people seem to walk around in the dark while others seem to walk around in the light. What makes the difference? How does the decision to follow Christ add light to your life?

Lighting the Way

Luminaries are a popular custom used to light and decorate a hallway. Create luminaries using the following instructions and plan a special late evening activity to celebrate the light. If possible make enough so that each student can take one home as a symbol of the light of Christ.

Collect a variety of clean glass jars (pickle jars, jelly jars). From several colors of tissue paper tear small pieces not bigger than one inch and glue them to the outside of the jar with white all-purpose glue thinned with water and applied with a small paintbrush. Leave about an inch of clear glass at the top of the jar. When the jar is covered, apply an additional coat of thinned glue over the entire jar. Let the jars dry, then add about one inch of sand to the bottom of each jar. This is to add weight to stabilize the jar and to hold the candle in place when the luminaries are burning. Use a long fireplace match when lighting the luminaries, and practice good safety methods.

glass jars, multi-colored tissue paper, all-purpose glue, scissors, flat paintbrushes, sand, votive candles, matches

Expand

Reminder

Remind students how important light is in their lives, from the small night-light in the dark or the flashlight when camping. Ask them to think about and share what the light does for them. (Refer back to the “light/dark walk” activity.) How can those small lights be compared to the light of Christ?

candle, matches

Light a candle. Close class with a prayer of thanks for God’s gift of light, Jesus Christ, and for people who are willing to respond to the light.